UEP 306: FOOD AND THE ENVIRONMENT

Course Topic: Food Justice
Spring 2016
Wednesday 1:00-4:00pm
UEP Conference Room

INSTRUCTORS
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OFFICE HOURS
by appointment

COURSE OVERVIEW AND OBJECTIVES
Food issues are among the most contested and significant issues today. Debates about food include how and where it is grown, how it is processed and manufactured into food products, how it is accessed and where it is sold, how food is prepared, and what, where and how it is eaten, as well as the role of policy and politics in determining who experiences the costs and benefits of contemporary/industrial food systems. The nature of the food system — that is, the activities and relationships that constitute various food pathways from seed to table and that influence the how and why and what we eat — resides at the center of this debate.

This course critically examines the contemporary food system by looking at food production, distribution, consumption, and waste with a holistic perspective and developing a framework for understanding and addressing issues of food justice. We will examine who does and does not benefit from our global food system (which includes some of the most powerful corporations in the world) and the effects on our health, communities and our environment. We will also learn about an emerging food movement that challenges the dominant system, including groups for whom justice and equity are central concerns, and promotes the idea that another type of food system is possible. This course will thus use the concepts of a “food system” and of “food justice” as its organizing principles. We’ll look at different policies, programs, political struggles, and the social and economic and cultural forces that influence and shape the food system and that generate food justice activism.
Through the course, students will:

- Gain knowledge of today’s food system, including how food is produced, distributed, consumed, and disposed of and the nature of food system problems and their possible solutions.
- Develop analytic skills to make connections between the food system and economic development, community health, the environment, neighborhood and regional planning, labor, organizing and advocacy, and local, state and federal public policy.
- Identify how and why low-income communities of color are disproportionately affected by market and policy failures to produce and distribute healthy, safe food.
- Gain understanding of the current food landscape and policy debates in Los Angeles by talking with food justice activists, planners and policy.
- Examine the role of planners/practitioners/policy makers in either hindering or promoting food justice and critically evaluate efforts – including grassroots, policy, and planning attempts – to address food issues.
- Develop new strategies and action plans toward food justice.

COURSE STRUCTURE
The course will be organized into two sections: Food Systems and Food Access. Class time will be a time for discussion and critical reflections on course readings and site visits. The course will address current and emerging food system issues and policy debates by inviting guest speakers from the front lines of the food justice and food system movement in Los Angeles and across the nation as well as class field trips to food justice sites in LA. As a Community Based Learning (CBL) class, one of the primary class goals is to support a local food justice organization. A group project will be developed with community partners that will help to enhance their work.

COURSE/CAMPUS POLICIES & SUPPORT SERVICES
Classroom Responsibilities
The teacher and students share the responsibility of creating the space and stimulating enthusiasm for learning. Students are responsible for attending and participating in class and off site field trips, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material in class and attending. Students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other, the professor and community partners. In order to ensure open, honest, thoughtful, and respectful learning, teaching, class and community discussions please:

- Use laptops, tablet, or other electronic devices only for work directly related to what we are doing in class. Do not use cell phones to talk or text. Instructors reserve the right to confiscate electronics used in a disruptive way and return them at the end of the class period).
- Inform the professor when you may have to arrive late or leave early with advanced notice when possible;
  - As this class is community based, all field trips and guest lectures are mandatory. If you are absent for these classes, an alternative assignment must be discussed ahead of time.
- Engage in active and courteous listening to other students and community partners and contribute respectfully to class and community discussions.

**Academic Integrity**

As stated in the Occidental College Student Handbook, intellectual honesty is “essential to the educational purposes and fairness of the academic enterprise. Occidental College assumes that students and faculty will embrace a high ethical standard for academic work. In all work, students shall behave conscientiously, taking and giving credit where credit is due, avoiding even an appearance of impropriety, and when in doubt, consulting the instructor or other knowledgeable persons as to whether particular conduct, collaboration, and/or acknowledgement of sources in appropriate. Academic misconduct occurs when a student misrepresents others’ work as her/his own or otherwise behaves so as to unfairly advantage her/himself or another student academically. Examples of misconduct include cheating and plagiarism. If this or other misconduct occurs to any extent in connection with any academic work, it will be subject to disciplinary action.” For further information, please see the Occidental College Student Handbook.

**Support Services**

The college provides a set of resources to students to support them in learning. The Center for Academic Excellence (CAE) provides writing assistance to students to develop ideas, draft, and revise papers. We encourage everyone to take advantage of this resource.

If you have specific physical or learning disabilities and require accommodations, please let us know early in the semester so that we can meet your learning needs. The College’s mission is to support learning for all students and provides Disability Services for students with learning disabilities. Please contact Ericka O’Neal Howard, Associate Dean of Students at (323) 259-2969 and/or by email: or visit her in AGC 111. The Emmons Health and Counseling Center provides support for issues of stress, medical and mental health.

**Requirements and Grading**

1. **Participation – 25%**

*Class Engagement*

Students are responsible for attending and participating in class and off site field trips, completing assignments in a timely manner, and being prepared to discuss readings and material
in class and attending. Students are also responsible for engaging in respectful, open, and thoughtful discussion with each other, the professor and community partners.

**This Week in Food**
Each class will begin with a review of “This Week in Food”. Students should comb at least one daily source of news, such as the LA Times or New York Times, for food-related news. 

*Assignment:* Post the title and link to your article on Moodle by Tuesday night. Come prepared to class with a brief summary and personal reflection to share orally.

**Discussion Questions based on readings/videos**
Completing the assigned reading/videos prior to class is essential for class participation. We will adjust the reading level throughout the semester as needed. Identify questions and issues that should to be addressed for the seminar discussions.

*Assignment:* Post a minimum of 5 thoughtful discussion questions related to materials on Moodle by Tuesday night. If a guest speaker or field trip is scheduled, review the organization's materials and/or website prior to event and include additional questions for the site host or speaker.

### 2. FOOD JUSTICE TOPIC RESEARCH ASSIGNMENT – 35%

**Midterm Research Paper** - (20%)
Students will sign up for a food justice research topic on the first day of class. Midterm research papers should be 7-10 pages in length with a minimum of 12 references and address the following questions:
1. What is the issue, including historical context, and what part of the supply chain is most affected?
2. What is the power struggle involved in the issue and who are the key players?
3. How is it a food justice issue?

*Assignment:* Post on Moodle on the dates below:
- Choose topic - 1/20/16
- Literature Review (APA format) - 2/17/16
- Final paper due - 3/2/16

**PowerPoint Presentation** - (15%)
This will be a 10 minute presentation summarizing your food justice research topic and findings. The presentation should have 5-10 slides and include references.

*Assignment:* Presentations will be held in class on 3/23/16, post PPT on Moodle after class.

### 3. COMMUNITY BASED LEARNING PROJECT – 40%

**Deliverable to Community Partner** (20%)
The class will contribute to a community based learning project, *Good Food For All: Guide for Farmers’ Market Managers* that will outline best practices for farmers’ markets to accept and process federal food assistance. The community partners involved in this publication include:

- The Urban & Environmental Policy Institute at Occidental College (UEPI)
- Sustainable Economic Enterprises of Los Angeles (SEE-LA)
- Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA)
- Los Angeles Community Action Network (LA CAN)
- Los Angeles Food Policy Council

**Group Presentation** (10%)

*Details tbd*

**Journal Reflections** (10%)

Since a large part of the class is reflection, you will keep a weekly journal on:

- Classroom presentations
- Field Trips
- Writing Prompts
- CBL Experience

*Assignment:* Post your short journal reflections on Moodle by Tuesday night.

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**CLASS SCHEDULE**

**OVERVIEW**

**Week 1 // Jan 20th**

*Topic: Introduction - The food system & food justice*

**PART I: FOOD SYSTEMS**

**Week 2 // Jan 27th**

*Topic: The rise of “Big Ag” and Environmental Impacts of the Industrial-Scale Global Food System*

*Speaker: Megan Bomba (GMOs and seeds)*

**READINGS:**

- *The Omnivore’s Dilemma* by Michael Pollan *Chapt 1 & 2: Industrial Corn*
- Local Farmer Turns to Non-GMO Seeds

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- This week in food
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry: definition of food justice

**Week 3 // Feb 3rd**
Topic: Introduction to Community Partner Project / The rise of “Big Ag” and Environmental Impacts of the Industrial-Scale Global Food System cont.

**FIELD TRIP:** Altadena Farmers’ Market
http://altadenafarmersmarket.com/
NOTE: Class will be from 2:30-5:30pm

FIELD TRIP: Proyecto Jardin
http://www.proyectojardin.org/

**READINGS:**


Website: Food and Water Watch’s factory farm map - http://www.factoryfarmmap.org/
Video: Vandana Shiva: Why biodiversity is important to people (Interview) Taipei, Taiwan. (May 1, 2010).

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- This week in food
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry: Reflection on GMO talk

Week 4 // Feb 10th

TOPIC: Community Project Site Visit / The rise of “Big Ag” and Environmental Impacts of the Industrial-Scale Global Food System cont.

FIELD TRIP: Adams and Vermont “St. Agnes” Farmers’ Market field trip meet Frank Tamborello from Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA)
http://www.hungeractionla.org/

NOTE: Class will be from 2:00-5:00pm

READINGS:
- Website: http://www.fundinguniverse.com/company-histories/sunkist-growers-inc-history/
- Website: food borne illness - https://www.msu.edu/~howardp/foodborne.html

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- This Week in Food
- Discussion Questions
• Journal entry: Reflect on food justice and larger social justice issues around the struggle to save Proyecto Jardin? What would you propose as a solution?

Week 5 // Feb 17th
TOPIC: Food Chain Workers

GUEST SPEAKER: Joann Lo, Food Chain Workers Alliance
http://foodchainworkers.org

READINGS:
• tbd

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
• Food Justice Paper Literature Review due
• This Week in Food
• Discussion Questions
• Journal entry: St. Agnes farmers market; comparison to Altadena farmers market

Week 6 // Feb 24th
TOPIC: Food System Solutions

GUEST SPEAKER: Tim Alderson, Seeds of Hope - UEP Remsen Bird Funding

READINGS:
• tbd

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
• This Week in Food
• Discussion Questions
• Journal entry: Reflection on Food Chain Workers talk

Week 7 // Mar 2nd
TOPIC: Good Jobs in the Supply Chain

FIELD TRIP: LA Kitchen, Meet Robert Egger
http://www.lakitchen.org/

READINGS:
ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- Midterm Food Justice Topic paper due
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry:

WEEK 8 // Mar 9th
SPRING BREAK March 7-11th

PART II: FOOD ACCESS

WEEK 9 // Mar 16th
TOPIC: Negative Impacts of the Industrial Global Food System: Connections to the Modern Diet, Food Environments, & Food Insecurity (Rosa has a powerpoint)

GUEST SPEAKER: Matt Sharp, LA City Health Commission

READINGS:
- tbd

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- Midterm Food Justice Topic paper due
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry:

WEEK 10 // Mar 23th
TOPIC: Food Justice Topic Presentations & Community Project Check-in

READINGS:
- tbd

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- Food Justice Topic PowerPoint Presentations (in-class)
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry:

WEEK 11 // Mar 30th
TOPIC: Food Access Solutions

GUEST SPEAKER: Frank Tamborello from Hunger Action Los Angeles (HALA)
http://www.hungeractionla.org/

READINGS:
- tbd

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- This week in food
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry:

WEEK 12 // Apr 6th
TOPIC: Urban Ag and Access to Land

FIELD TRIP:
- Community Services Unlimited, meet Neelem Sharma,
  http://csuinc.org/
- Former South Central Farmers site https://www.southcentralfarmers.com/

READINGS:
- Save the Farm! http://www.hulu.com/watch/265201
- Burton, Brook. “South Central Farmers: New Life with a Ceremony, a Festival + Water” LA Weekly
- http://cultivatelosangeles.org/
- www.victorpgardenssandiego.com

ASSIGNMENTS DUE:
- This week in food
- Discussion Questions
- Journal entry:

WEEK 13 // Apr 13th
TOPIC: School Food

GUEST SPEAKER: TBA
WEEK 14 // Apr 20th
TOPIC: Urban Food Access
FIELD TRIP: TBA

WEEK 15 // Apr 27th
TOPIC: Final Project: Group Presentation